

Minist. of the United States
Philadelphia, March 19th 1838

Sir,

At receipt at the Mint, this morning from Mess. Woodward & Loane of Bristol, a specimen of a counterfeit half-dollar which I send to you, with the exception of a part cut off for analysis. As the resemblance to the legitimate coin is sufficiently close, both in the execution and the material, to make it dangerous, I have thought that you might judge it proper to cause an investigation into the matter to be made by the Director of the Mint.

If the piece be compared with those coins of the same date, (1832, 1833, 1834) many points of difference may be readily detected; yet it must be acknowledged that the mechanical execution is so good as not to be likely to excite general suspicion.

The metal of which it is made appears to be from what is called German Silver, which is a compound of Copper, Zinc, and Nickel; and many

be distinguished from standard silver by the following tests.

1st. There is a difference, though not very manifest, in the shade of colour, the German silver ^{having} a closer resemblance to silver.

2d. It has a peculiar greasy feel, which is not furnished by silver, and which is readily perceived on comparing the two.

3d. It is promptly dissolved in cold nitric acid, while silver is but slowly acted upon.

4th. If a solution of common salt be in salt water, be added to the solution, there will be but a trace of precipitation, while salt added throws down the solution of silver in a white insoluble powder.

5th. It is dissolved in nitro-muriatic acid, and silver is not.

6th. The specific gravity of the mixture being about $8\frac{1}{2}$, and that of standard silver about $10\frac{1}{4}$.

examined by

R. M. P.

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Dr

To
Hon. Lewis Woodbury,
Sec. of Treasury.

P.S. - I find that we have in our collection about another counterfeit half dollar which the collector thinks has been here at least two years, and which exactly resembles that sent for our examination by Messrs. Woodwards & Clark. Shall I suppose this last to be a new counterfeit and, on that ground, suggest suggested an inquiry into the matter, but it is perhaps now too late to hope for success in an investigation.